



INVOLVE ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL BOARDS IN 10 EASY STEPS

All districts are at a different stage of readiness when it comes to creating a healthy school environment. Implementing the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* is no different. No change comes without growing pains but those pains can be lessened by gaining support and planning ahead for the change.

A common message came from districts that piloted the standards during the 2010-2011 school year. Administrative support was a key to successful implementation of the standards.

AS AN ADMINISTRATOR OR DISTRICT LEADER YOU CAN:

1. **Read the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*** and create a vision for your district. What kinds of food and beverages will you offer in your vending machines? What might you sell at concession stands? What options are available for fundraising that are not unhealthy foods? What will students be eating at classroom parties?
2. **Take that vision to the Coordinated School Health Team** (CSHT) or assemble a Coordinated School Health Team. As the standards do impact fundraising, make sure all groups are at the table to discuss how the standards will be implemented (Parent-Teacher Association, Booster Groups, Clubs, etc.).
3. **Have the CSHT create an action plan** on how to implement the standards in your district or building. This plan is the product of a combined effort from a representative group in the district. This plan also gives something for those on “the front line” to reference to people who are questioning the implementation of the standards.
4. **Build support and momentum** by educating staff and interested parties on the importance of making a change as well as having families be partners in the change. Don't limit the education to just teachers; include transportation staff, custodians, secretaries, paraprofessionals, administration, and the school board.

5. **Gain staff support** by utilizing them as active agents for change and enlist them to help create solutions. Suggestions for how to educate staff have been created and are in this toolkit. Implementing the standards will run more smoothly if staff feel that they are together in this effort.



“It is actually a relief to be able to do what is right and still have the fall back response of ‘because we have to.’”

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“It was crucial to have the support and buy in from the superintendent and administration team—consistent messages from the whole team.”

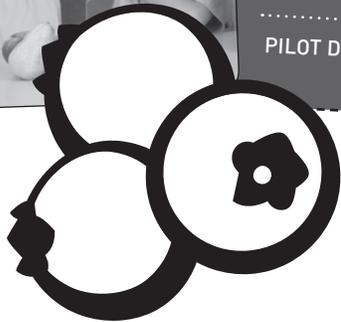
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- 6. **Communicate frequently with staff** and be positive about the plan that was created by the district team.
- 7. **Make wellness a standing agenda item at meetings.** This can be a time to share a small piece of information or to give kudos to staff members that are actively and creatively implementing the standards. Practice the standards and offer healthy choices at meetings.
- 8. **Be available to staff for questions and problem solving.** Keeping a positive attitude helps put the change into action. By keeping the effort at the forefront and taking these steps, it creates the culture shift of making health the default.
- 9. **Educate and communicate changes to key groups and families.** When communication comes from school administration it has a strong impact. Ask representatives from clubs, boosters, or parent organizations to go back to their groups and educate their members. They can display materials and information about the standards at open houses, athletic events, assemblies, school concerts, and/or parent-teacher conferences.
- 10. **Spread the word.** Supply school staff and parent organizations with information about the standards that they can use in school and classroom newsletters, on the school district website, on a school-sponsored TV channel, or through social media such as Facebook or Twitter. Be creative and make it fun!

Start the education early and often. Continuing it will help you fully open the lines of communication with the school community. Families that may not initially be supportive about the changes will be able to fully understand the rationale and science base behind the nutrition standards and not get blindsided by quick changes, or educated through the rumor mill.

As with all change, each pilot district reported that time makes a difference. By the end of the fall semester of the implementation year students, staff, and families got used to the changes.



“There was some opposition from the parents at first...but it’s not even an issue anymore. The more parental support you have, it makes the success rate grow and grow.”

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